

[Rush Myers]

Week No. 12

Item No. 19

Words 1600

Percent

Received

Accredited S241 - LA DUP

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS [6934 Francis St.?)

DATE March 31, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk stuff

1. Name and address of informant. Rush Myers, 3104 [Holdrege?] St. Lincoln.
2. Date and time of interview. March 30, 1939. 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
3. Place of interview. Grocery store operated by informant
4. Name and address of person, if any who put you in touch with informant. None.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None

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6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Neighborhood grocery store in the state Farm section of Lincoln. Store room somewhat [resembles?] the old "cracker barrel" areas roads store of by gone days. Unlike the modern fast moving business, its atmosphere suggests plenty of leisure, while there is lots of available space not stacked with goods and which might offer a parking place for those who come to linger awhile. Surrounds are for the most part just average American city residences with an occasional barber shop, drug store and gasoline station.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE March 31, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Rush Myers, 3104 Holdrege St. Lincoln

1. Ancestry. Pennsylvania Dutch (Scotch German)
2. [Place?] and date of birth. Chambersburg, Penn., Oct. 22, 1869.
3. Family. One boy, a partner in the business.
4. Places lived in, with dates. Penn. 1869-1880 Iowa 1880-1881 Crab Orchard and Vesta Neb. 1881-1929 Lincoln, Nebr. 1929 to date.
5. Education, with dates. Country school, Vesta Nebr. 1881 to 1890
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Farming and grain elevator operator, 1890 to 1929
7. Special skills and interests. Grocery business 1929 to date. Buying and dealing in grain

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8. Community and religious activities. Active in church, Sunday School etc.

9. Description of informant. Spare built, 5 feet 10 inches, rather angular face, with rigid cast and [prominent?] pointed ears,nose aquiline.

10. Other points gained in interview. Complexion ruddy and weather beaten graying hair. Mr. Myers is an old school type, easy to meet, [congenial?], with an unaffected direct manner. Gives impression of being sincere and kindly and of high moral calibre. Just a real good folks character.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS [6934?] Francis St. Lincoln

DATE March 31, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Rush Meyers, 3104 Holdrege St. Lincoln

After we came to Nebraska, even tho just a kid, I began to realize, we were in a brand new world with people around us who seemed almost foolish in the way they trusted and helped their neighbors. Why there was a man, near Vesta a kind of farmer and trader who had never as far as I [know?], ever heard of my father before, but when dad needed some stock and feed to get started , this man told him to take it along and pay him in the fall when he made a crop. No note, nothing signed and the bill was over \$100.00. And it was paid too. I'll bet he'd have tough luck doing that today and a good many have had it too. Most people [don't?] take any pride in paying their bills anymore but they sure hurry to pay off the mortgage on their car even if they let 'em take the home. A grocery bill was almost a [scared?] thing but not anymore.

I liked the thrill and excitement of the eighties from the rattlesnakes around, the house to the tobacco chewin'. Mule skinnners on the new railroad which went thru' near us.

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Us boys used to hang around and watch them and the men driving the slips would try to coax us to drive a few rounds while they rested. We would do this but we always picked a guy who chewed tobacco and then we could get a chew.

Our folks wouldn't [hear?] to us buying or having any chewin' around.

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One time I got up nerve and asked the store keeper to trust me for a plug, 10¢ worth at that time. He did and I wanted to show off so went over to the gradin' camp where some of the men were hangin' around. One of them who had me drive for him on the dump gave the wink to the rest of them and paid 'say buddy do you happen to have a chew of [eatin tarbacoer?]? Tryin' to act as natural as possible but feelin' puffed just the same, I hauled out that big plug, which wasn't even paid for. He looked kinda surprised but took it and bit off about a fourth of it. That was alright but he turned and handed it to one of the others. He bit into it and passed it on. They cleaned it up but I wanted to be game so pretended it was nothing to me. After that he handed me 15¢ and told me to start buying another plug.

School was a hit or miss proposition then and everyone had different kinds of books. The scholars furnished their own and got which ever kind was the handiest for them. The girls all sat together on one side and the boys on the other side. We did this way in Sunday School too, like the Quakers in church, only we didn't wear our hats like the Quaker men did. I never hear of a Sunday School picnic anymore but they used to be the big thing of the year and we looked forward for weeks to the time which was latter part of summer.

Like today the boys didn't think some kinds of stealin' was really stealin' such as watermelons, apples, etc. To take a dollars worth of melons out of a neighbors patch would be nothing but to steal even a penny in money would be terrible. Our folks, though and all the parents thought one was as bad as another and were strict about it.

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Well anyway my brother and I were shucking corn along in our field right next to a squash patch which belonged to our neighbor, West Richardson. We argued a while about takin' just one, they looked so nice and agreed to tell the folks that Wes' gave it to us. It was a dandy one and the folks felt pretty kindly toward Mr. Richardson for his generosity. Neighbors didn't have telephones or see each other every day but Maw had a quilting bee a few days later and Mrs. Richardson was to be there. Now Maw thought it would be nice to return the favor so she invited Wes and his wife over to the dinner, which always was part of the Bee. The women eat at the first table and after they got through the men and children set down to eat. At that time when they was company the kids always waited until the grown folks were finished and then eat at the second table as it was called.

Well when we were all set down, Maw spoke up and says, Mr. Robinson we sure thank you for the fine squash you gave the boys. He looked kinda confused but didn't say anything. I see it was going to take some explainin' so says right out, 'maw, you've gone and spilt the beans now. We stole that squash.' 'You didn't either', says Wes, 'don't you remember I told you to take some of them when you shucked that down row along the fence,' and there's more of 'em there for you. Everybody laughed and I guess they caught on though Wes' stuck to his story.

In those days different localities had their neighborhood gangs who banded together and were quick to fight. They weren't very friendly as a group and a fuss between any of the boys would likely bring on a bad feeling between the rival gangs.

Around where we lived were the Turkey Creek Boys and The Yankee Creek 4 Irish. There was a jealous feeling between the two outfits partly because the Turkey Creek Boys claimed the best corn shucker. One night both gangs came to a dance at Vests and the Yankee Creek Irish were spoilin' for trouble.

A few of us boys had gone to look on and were settin' on a platform at one end of the [ball?]. We called it nigger heaven though it was just a stage used for entertainments. The

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dance got going' and the Irish got into a couple of the sets and the Turkey Creek Boys were in the other. Then one of the Irish busted right out and said "I can whip any man here who says he can shuck a hundred bushels of corn a day." Jack Shoner of the Turkey Creek Boys took him right up and they went to it right there while the dancers were still going through the steps.

Then some more pitched in and the dance turned into a free for all. Why, even some the rival girls pulled a little hair, although mostly the women then let their men do the quarrelin'.

Ruf Pierce, a two fisted hard fightin' old timer took a hand there and tore into the fight. He had a neck yoke and knocked 'em right and left till the tough Irish decided they had had enough.

Now a days they would call the law but then they just took care of the thing themselves.

It's funny but in those days nearly every one was hard up but no one asked for relief. It was considered a disgrace and what was done in this way was volunteered and not asked for.

Public opinion was a different sort too. Why if any couple went to the Judge to get married, people were apt to think it was a 'shot gun' affair. And if a young couple were keepin' company and one of them went 5 away for a spell, the other wouldn't think of runnin' around with some one else. In case somebody died, the neighbors and friends were notified personally and came to help. I've dug many a grave and helped around, even to fixing the glass jars filled with ice around the corpse in the coffin. A widow would usually wear her black veil and dress for six months after her husband passed away.

Automobiles, radios and modern inventions have changed the people about and the good old 'folksy' customs have given way to more selfish ones.